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TAGS: PREL PGOV PARM NATO OSCE RS

SUBJECT: RUSSIAN DFM KISLYAK ON US RELATIONS, MD, IRAN, HOM O'NEILL, KUZNETSOV

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns: 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a wide-ranging meeting with the Ambassador on March 23, Deputy Foreign Minister Kislyak noted that a visit by U/S Edelman was delayed by the replacement of his counterpart and GOR concerns that the format did not address overarching Russian concerns over US strategic intentions. Kislyak argued for a high-level strategic dialogue, which also could help refine the Presidents' bilateral agenda and produce a positive declaration (along the lines of Bratislava) for release at the June G8 Summit. In that context, he urged a visit by the Secretary. Kislyak welcomed the Carnegie-Lukin human rights dialogue, and noted enthusiastic GOR support for the proposed Kissinger-Primakov "wise men" discussion. He noted full GOR support for the UNSC sanctions resolution, with Iran still refusing to engage on a freeze-for-freeze proposal. In response to the Ambassador's protests, Kislyak insisted that OSCE HOM O'Neill may have committed a criminal offense, which was still being "digested" by the GOR. He reviewed GOR complaints over the Kuznetsov case. Kislyak expressed appreciation for the Secretary's condolences on the mining disaster. End Summary

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¶2. (C) Visitors: In a March 23 meeting, the Ambassador briefed Kislyak on the status of the visit of Secretary Gutierrez (April 2-4); Duma International Relations Committee Chairman Kosachev's travel to Washington and mid-May meeting with Chairman Lantos, followed by a June 21 delegation visit with the House International Relations Committee; the dispatch of a Reliable Replacement Warhead briefing team, pending GOR dates; possibility of a SecDef visit later in the year in response to Russia's invitation; and the efforts to arrange for a near-term visit by Under Secretary of Defense Edelman, to discuss a wide range of security issues, including missile defense, which was delayed due to the transfer of his counterpart, General Mazurkevich.

¶3. (C) MD Consultations not sufficient: Kislyak confirmed Mazurkevich's departure, and said the GOR would need more time before it could respond to the Edelman offer. At issue was the GOR's conviction that a wider discussion, and not just another briefing on missile defense deployment areas or conventional warheads, was required. Instead, the GOR was preoccupied by the "whole spectrum" of issues, which needed to be taken up together. While the US maintained that ABM was not anti-Russian, the GOR had its own graphs, and its own trajectories and assessments. If Russia sought to pursue the stated US goals, it would deploy differently; therefore, it concluded that decisions to base in the Czech Republic and Poland had a strong political flavor. That led the GOR to develop a theory behind the US strategy, which pieced together the Alaska deployment, the new generation interceptors, and the silos in question, as well as intentions to expand the US program into the Caucasus and the UK, and throughout the world through the Aegis. The GOR

concerns were not about two sites, but about ultimate US intentions.

14. (C) High-level strategic dialogue required: Stressing again that US briefings were not convincing, Kislyak argued for "something higher," a dialogue that would include Chief of Staff Baluyevskiy, other agency representatives and himself. The Ambassador responded that the US had its own issues to raise, including Russian threats to walk away from the INF, and said he would convey the MFA's views on the need to elevate the structure, which echoed remarks that Security Council Secretary Igor Ivanov had made to NSA Hadley.

15. (C) Preparing for Bilateral at June G8 Summit: Kislyak stressed that positive developments in the bilateral relationship could set the stage for a presidential announcement in June, patterned on Bratislava. The building blocks were the Presidents' commitment to the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, an initialing of a "123" agreement, the deepening of the Antonov/DeSutter dialogue on the post-Start stewardship of nuclear weapons, progress in WTO, and the success of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Kislyak noted that a high-level strategic dialogue could also help generate the focus needed to keep the initiatives on track for the Presidents to review in June. The Ambassador agreed that progress was being made in strategic areas, and reviewed next steps on "123" and anti-dumping negotiations. Kislyak added that a visit by the Secretary in advance of the June summit, in addition to a new, high-level security dialogue, would help define a positive agenda.

16. (C) Unofficial dialogue structures: The Ambassador pointed to progress by Carnegie and GOR Human Rights Ombudsman Lukin to initiate an unofficial human rights dialogue, and the on-going discussions by former Secretary of State Kissinger and former Prime Minister Primakov to create a "wise men" group on US-Russian relations, as positive steps

MOSCOW 00001305 002 OF 002

in focusing attention on the bilateral relationship. Kislyak agreed, noting that the GOR was very supportive and pleased by the caliber of US members being discussed for this group, expected that a first meeting could take place in Russia by the beginning of May.

17. (C) Iran: Kislyak reviewed the last impediments to finalizing the second sanctions package against Iran, arguing that a proposed amendment sought by Indonesia and the one-day delay needed by the South Africans were a reasonable price to pay for a unanimous resolution. Kislyak underscored that the GOR was satisfied both with the text and the statement. The Ambassador stressed the value of getting the resolution passed this weekend, and expressed appreciation for the spirit in which the negotiations were concluded, and noted that it remained to be seen how Iran would react. Kislyak noted that the Iranians were focused on a "new meeting," but had declined to elaborate, perhaps because it was linked to Ahmenejad's visit to New York, which was still unconfirmed.

Kislyak noted that he had raised the freeze-for-freeze proposal and briefed on the scope of the upcoming UNSC statement with the Iranian Ambassador in Moscow, but heard nothing new in response.

18. (C) OSCE HOM Lou O'Neill: The Ambassador raised the unusual and unwelcome public focus by the GOR on O'Neill, in the wake of what appeared to be an innocent customs violation. Noting that the U.S. did not have detailed information on what violations were being alleged, the Ambassador expressed concern over the public campaign, and the prospect that this would be transformed into a bilateral issue. The Ambassador made clear that O'Neill enjoyed the full support of the U.S., and that it was essential that Moscow stop creating impediments to O'Neill doing his job. The Ambassador underscored that this type of campaign served no one's interests, including Moscow's. Kislyak responded that legal issues were involved, and that this may be a

criminal offense under Russian law. While O'Neill was an international civil servant, he did not enjoy diplomatic immunity in Russia. Kislyak said he was pleased that the authorities had allowed O'Neill to leave, but "law enforcement has its own views." The GOR needed to "digest the implications" and was waiting for a legal analysis of O'Neill's case. Kislyak said O'Neill should have known that such historical collections could not be removed from Russia.

¶9. (C) Kuznetsov: Kislyak, noting Lavrov's recent letter to the Secretary and conversation about the status of the Russian diplomat convicted in the oil-for-food investigation, renewed GOR criticism over the revocation of Kuznetsov's immunity, the impartiality of the judicial process, and the GOR's conviction that the Department could have resolved the case before the trial. The Ambassador stressed that, in the wake of the verdict, it was too late to second-guess the process and the GOR should consider next steps in light of the sentencing expected by the end of June. Kislyak reiterated the sensitivity of this case to the GOR.

¶10. (C) Condolence letter: The Ambassador delivered the Secretary's letter of condolence on the mining accident in

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Ulyanovskaya, which Kislyak expressed appreciation for and undertook to pass directly to FM Lavrov.

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